

Members Day Testimony: Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
Congresswoman Lizzie Fletcher  
Wednesday, May 26, 2021

- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to testify today before the Committee about how we can support our country's veterans and the priorities for my district in Houston.
- More than 300,000 veterans call the Houston area home. According to the City of Houston's Office of Veterans Affairs, Houston has the second-largest veteran population in the United States.
- I support the priorities the Chairman has announced for the Committee, and I come before you today to bring attention to one proposal in particular in the effort to modernize and meet the needs of our diverse veteran population.
- Ensuring that disabled veterans can live independent and mobile lives is of great importance.
- In my community and in communities across the country, independence and mobility are tied to transportation generally and to cars in particular. For disabled veterans, driving a car can present unique challenges.
- Fortunately, the Department of Veterans Affairs has a successful grant program, the Automobile and Special Adaptive Equipment Grant Program, that makes it possible

for service-disabled veterans to purchase cars and adapt them to meet their specific needs.

- This program, however, only allows for a one-time payment for one vehicle. If veterans need to replace their cars over time, as is the usual course, the program is not available for subsequent purchases, and veterans pay for the modifications themselves, often many thousands of dollars.
- Last week, with Chairman Takano, I introduced H.R. 3304, the *Care Access Resources for Vets Act*, or *CARS for Vets Act* to address this issue.
- This legislation builds on the success of the VA's current program. It allows program participants to purchase additional vehicles to meet their needs every 10 years. That way, even if the lifecycle of a veteran's adapted car expires and it needs to be replaced, veterans can continue to rely on the VA's grant program.
- This Committee has estimated that nearly 60,000 veterans would benefit from the *CARS for Vets Act* in the next 10 years.
- Thank you for all you do to support our veterans, and for your consideration of this bill that will bring meaningful assistance to those who have served us all.